

MADISON COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

January / February / March 09

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"I never give them hell.... I just tell them the truth and they think it's hell" Harry Truman

COMMUNICATION CENTER:

The Madison County Communication Center has a bit more floor space now that the 80's era Motorola Console has been removed. Though the console worked fairly well, its large size, difficulty in getting parts and limitations on frequency's necessitated a change.

The photo to the right shows the new counters and added floor space in the communication center.

Bridger Technicians are still working on fine tuning the new computerized radio that was installed to replace the Motorola Console.



MADISON COUNTY OBTAINS GRANT FOR NEW 911 PHONE SYSTEM

Madison County has been working with the Montana State Public Safety Service Bureau to clear the hurdles for the purchase of a new PLANT CML "state of the art" E911 phone system. The system will be purchased with the help of grant money from PSSB.

Madison County signed a contract with Century Tel to purchase, install and train the operators of the new system - through funds offered by the Public Safety Service Bureau.

Installation of the new system is set to begin sometime around mid-May. It will take about 2 weeks to install the system and another week to train the Madison County Communication Officers on the use of the newly installed 911 phone system.

"This new system goes a long way in upgrading our 911 phone service and we look forward to the improved phone capability of the Plant CML equipment" said Sheriff Dave Schenk.

The new system is said to be compatible with the Sheriff's Office telephone hardware and is supposed to integrate seamlessly with the Sheriff's Office telephones.

ABOVE: Communication Officer Heather Woirhaye, with her back to the camera working in the recently remodeled Communication Center



PHOTO ABOVE: Communication TAC Supervisor Janet Fortner dispatching in the Communication Center prior to the 2009 remodel. The Motorola Console can be seen to the left side of the picture. The old Motorola console used a lot of floor space, needed repairs to continue functioning as designed and had limited frequency capacity - but one thing is certain, you can't beat the voice quality and durability of the old radio. Because of voice quality and a durability that is hard to beat, most hated to see it go. Though the computer controlled voice quality of the newer radio may not be as pleasing, getting parts and repairs for the Motorola made it unwise to push its longevity any further. An update was needed and a major change was made.

AN ELECTRICAL GHOST IN THE COURTHOUSE ?



West Electric owner Mike West, investigates the electrical panels in the county courthouse following a strange event on March 16th. Northwestern Electric also paid a visit to the courthouse to check on the circuitry and grounding following the odd event.

A strange event took place in the courthouse during the evening of Monday March 16th. A power surge of some sort invaded the courthouse and caused computer and phone damage throughout the building. The problem was first noticed in the Communication Center by Communication Officer Heather Woirhaye.

About 6:15 PM, Heather noticed what seemed to be “excessive energy” in the dispatch office - with static and an odd “electrical feel” that caused popping and crackling on the radio system. Additionally, a loud unceasing howl or tone began to emulate from all three of the radios in dispatch. The loud noise only stopped after the power was turned off at the radio box in the rear boiler room. The computers went dead and the printer loaded paper on its own.

Another person in the dispatch office described the event as “electricity in the air that made your hair stand on end”. Karen Brown, the Madison County GIS / Info Tech Department Head said “as weird as this sounds, it was as if an electrical ghost came into the courthouse and jumped around from computer to computer, completely missing some and affecting others”.

Oddly enough, the infamous Jack Slade was hung in Virginia City, very close to 145 years to the day of this weird event. Slade, who had committed no serious crime in Virginia City, pleaded for his life, or at least a chance to say goodbye to his beloved wife. Before Slade's wife arrived to say goodbye, the vigilantes hanged him and he was dead.

Not too long after the very questionable execution of Slade, legitimate courts and prisons began to function in Virginia City. Though sporadic vigilante "justice" continued until 1867, it increasingly attracted public concern.

In March 1867, miners in one Montana mining district posted a notice in the local newspaper that they would hang five vigilantes for every one man hanged by them (the vigilantes). Thereafter, vigilante action faded away. In 1875 the building of County Courthouse was initiated and it was dedicated on July 4th 1876 - 100 years to the day after our nations birth.

We all know (presumably) that there is a scientific explanation for this odd occurrence. But the strange event does challenge the imagination and make for some interesting speculation as well. When a valid “scientific explanation” is found, we will report on it. In the mean time, none exists and the investigation continues.

We are doing all we can to find the cause of the problem - but until we do, we will follow the customary rule of human behavior, and blame it on somebody else - even if they're already dead.